SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, presently, the Government is considering the report, which has been submitted by the Group of Ministers constituted specifically to consider the requirements of the country, particularly, related to fertilizers and electricity generation. Only after reviewing the report the Government will take a decision.

*230. *[The questioner (Shri R.K. Anand) was absent. For answer vide page 35-36.]*

Decontrol of gas price

*231. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to decontrol gas price;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what would be its impact on power and fertilizer industries?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) As per the decision of the Government in the year 1997, the gas price was linked to the price of a basket of fuel oils with a prescribed floor and ceiling of Rs. 2150/Thousand Standard Cubic Metre (MSCM) and Rs. 2850/MSCM respectively. Gradually it was to reach 100% price parity by 2001-02 after a review by the end of the third year. However, the gas prices have not been revised since then. Government is now reviewing the question comprehensively including long-term policy in this regard. The issue of decontrol of gas prices will be taken up when the long-term policy on the question is finalized.

Presently, under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) contracts, producers are free to sell gas at market price in accordance with contractual terms. Also, under Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) finalized earlier with a number of companies, they are free to sell gas, while Government has right to buy it directly or through a nominee at a price mentioned in the respective PSCs.

Impact of gas pricing on power, fertilizer sectors would be clear once the long term gas pricing policy is decided.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, as far as decontrolling of gas

is concerned, when is he going to announce the long term policy? Has he made any study with regard to its impact on the people of this country?

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, the long term policy can be finalised once a view is taken by the Cabinet on the report which will be submitted by the Group of Ministers. But, the point is that gas is a requirement; gas is the fuel of the 21st century, and therefore, more and more gas is required. We are producing it indigenously, and, we are also going to import LNG from January, 2004. Therefore, based on that, we are considering how to do it.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, we are slowly withdrawing subsidies on power and fertilizers. In the event of decontrolling of gas, what will be its impact on fertilizer and power, since farmers are facing a lot of problems in putting their money in agriculture?

SHRI RAM NAIK: That is the issue which is under consideration and as soon as a decision is finalised, it will be known. But, we are concerned about the fate of farmers as well as the industry; and keeping that in mind, a decision will be taken.

*232. *[The questioner (Shri Rama Muni Reddy) was absent. For answer vide page 36-37.]*

*233. *[The questioner (Shri T.S. Baswa) was absent. For answer vide page 38.]*

जलाशयों का निर्माण

*234. **श्री कपिल सिब्बल:**

श्री लाजपत राय: '†'

क्या जल संसाधन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार के पास दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के दौरान समुद्र में अप्रयुक्त बहने वाले जल के भण्डारण हेतु बड़े और छोटे जलाशयों का निर्माण करने की कोई योजना है;

(ख) समुद्र में बह जाने वाले अप्रयुक्त जल की अनुमानित औसत मात्रा कितनी है; और

(ग) दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के दौरान कितने नये जलाशयों का निर्माण किए जाने की संभावना है और उनकी भण्डारण क्षमता कितनी होगी?

जल संसाधन मंत्री (श्री अर्जुन चरण सेठी): (क) से (ग) विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

'†' The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Lajpat Rai.